Questions Answered on the Greatest Tree-Clad Area *in* All the World

THE DOUGLAS FIR REGION
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
SEASIDE, OREGON

. . . . this leaflet was prepared by the West Coast Lumbermen's Association, 364 Stuart Building, Seattle, Washington . . . . Prospective builders and users of wood are invited to write the Association for further information about any of the West Coast woods.

. . . The Douglas Fir Forest . . .

Q. Where is the Greatest Tree-Clad Area in all the world?

A. It takes in the western third of the states of Oregon and Washington. Foresters call it the Douglas fir region.

Q. Why is it the Greatest Tree-Clad Area in all the world?

A. Because it has the greatest stand of timber per acre.

Q. Is the Douglas fir region largest in terms of acreage?

A. No, only in standing timber for one region. Douglas fir forests cover approximately 29,000,000 acres of land.

Q. How much standing timber is there in western Oregon and Washington?

A. The figures are almost unbelievable -- about 546,000,000,000 feet.

Q. Why is this region called the Douglas fir region?

A. Because of its king tree, the Douglas fir. According to figures issued by the U.S. Forest Service there are approximately 331,000,000,000 feet of Douglas fir timber in western Washington and Oregon.

Q. What are the other principal trees of this matchless region?

A. West Coast Hemlock is second in quantity stand with about 104,000,000,000 feet. Western red cedar and Sitka spruce are third and fourth.

. . . The King Tree . . .

Q. Why is Douglas fir "the king tree"?

A. It is the most valuable commercial tree on earth.

Q. How big are Douglas firs?

A. Some specimens are 300 feet tall and 14 feet in diameter. Douglas firs 200 feet tall and 8 feet in diameter are common.

Q. What is the main difference between Douglas fir forests and the other principal forest regions?

A. Density of growth. The South has over six times as much acreage of commercial forest land as the Douglas fir region, yet the Douglas fir region has more than four times as much standing timber.

Q. Why do Douglas firs and their brother trees grow to such huge size, and in such heavy stands?

A. The climate and soil of Western Washington and Oregon are reasons for our forest greatness. Mild winter winds from the Japan current blow over this coastal country. As they rise to pass over the mountains, rain is condensed from them and warm winter rains make trees grow.

Q. Are there other reasons for the Douglas fir greatness?

A. Yes. This tree, and also our hemlock, cedars and spruce are richly reproductive. The young stock grows naturally in dense thickets, while in other forest regions the native trees usually grow wide apart.

. . . America's Permanent Forest . . .

Q. Will lumbering operations leave the Douglas fir region barren?

A. No! In nature our trees grow to maturity, ripen, decline, and eventually fall in deadwood waste. Lumbering, when conducted according to the rules of good forest practice, is a harvest of the mature trees, and leaves clean, healthful growing conditions.

Q. Is this forest practice being followed?

A. The conservation policy of the lumber industry in the Douglas fir region provides that blocks of seed trees be left in each harvested section. Thus nature does her own replanting. Fire protection is 75 per cent of the problem of reforestation in our region. For this, standing snags and old dead trees, the worst fire hazards, are cut down in logging. They are then burned under safe conditions. This is real forest protection.

Q. How is this policy put into effect?

A. The West Coast Lumbermen's and Pacific Northwest Loggers Associations have a Conservation Department, which employs foresters to inspect logging operations, give instructions, and check on compliance. There is also a cooperative working program between this Conservation Department and National and State forest authorities.

The people of Western Oregon and Washington will guard their trust – – The Douglas Fir Region shall remain the Greatest Tree-Clad Area in all the World.

. . . Douglas Fir Logging . . .

Q. What is the difference between lumbering in Western Washington and Oregon and other forest regions?

A. The main difference is in the greater size of trees in the Douglas fir region. Logging in this region requires the heaviest type of special equipment.

Q. What is some of the special equipment used in West Coast logging?

A. Giant donkey engines and tow skidders are used generally for skidding logs from stumps to railroad or truck road. In a typical setup a large steel cable runs from the main drum of a

donkey engine to a block anchored as far away in the woods as 2000 feet.

Q. Do stumps hinder the big logs in skidding?

A. Not as a rule. There is usually a "head spar" at the skidding machine. This is a tree that has been stripped of its boughs, then topped and guyed. A huge block is hung on the spar, 100 to 150 feet from the ground. The main line is strung through this block. So the pull on a skidded log is from elevation. This tends to lift the log over obstacles.

Q. Are tractors used in West Coast logging?

A. Yes. Powerful crawler-type tractors have been developed especially for use in the Douglas fir region. Our loggers call them "cats." They are employed mainly on hauls which may be reached by heavy-duty motor trucks, which transport the logs on to the sawmills.

Q. Are West Coast loggers like the old-time lumberjacks?

A. Only in the movies. West Coast loggers are highly skilled mechanics. Their work demands rugged bodies, good headwork and trained hands. Wages paid them are higher than the average for all American manufacturing industries. Working and living conditions are of the best. As a result our loggers are as different from the old-time lumberjack as the tower-skidder is from the logging sled and the river drive.

. . . West Coast Sawmills . . .

Q. How many sawmills operate in the Douglas fir region?

A. Mills of all classes number about 900. More than 80 per cent of the West Coast's lumber production, however, comes from about 200 large mills.

Q. How much lumber can all the mills manufacture?

A. A late survey of 868 West Coast sawmills revealed a total normal annual capacity of 11,500,000,000 feet. But this capacity far exceeds the usual cut.

Q. How is the lumber shipped to market?

A. 60 per cent of our sawmills, in terms of capacity, are located on tidewater. These are called cargo mills. Their products are mostly shipped on ocean freighters to the Atlantic Coast, California and to foreign countries. The interior mills, and many of the cargo mills, ship lumber by rail.

Q. Do foreign countries use much West Coast lumber?

A. Our lumber industry was founded on foreign trade, more than 100 years ago. The depression, and new tariff barriers, together reduced our export trade, yet in 1935 we shipped lumber to 63 countries, with Japan our best customer.

Q. Does West Coast lumber manufacture, like its logging, differ from other regions?

A. Greatly. We have four great varieties of commercial softwoods, each being used for many purposes. A Douglas fir log contains some 600 commercial items.

Q. What are the principal uses?

A. Framing lumber from light joists and studding to heavy timber construction, bridges, roof trusses, siding, flooring and interior finish.

Q. What are some of the other uses of Douglas fir, West Coast hemlock, Western Red cedar, Sitka spruce and Port Orford cedar?

A. A few are: crossarms, special grades for ladders, spruce airplane stock, cedar siding, boat lumber, timber for columns, arches and roof

trusses, vat staves, silo and pipeline stock, diving springboards, masts for palatial pleasure yachts, ironing boards, wood toys, radio-tower timbers, floor pegs.

Q. Will you describe one example of the machinery that manufactures West Coast lumber?

A. The headsaw is the source of production in any mill. In the usual large West Coast mill it is a band of steel, 16 inches wide, and forming a 59-foot circle. It runs like a vertical power belt on two wheels, each 9 feet in diameter, one below, the other high above the sawing floor. The headsaw motor speeds it at the rate of ten thousand feet per minute. The flying rip teeth will slash through the length of a great Douglas fir log as a knife cuts through butter.

. . . Importance of Industry . . .

Q. What is the economic importance of lumbering to Washington and Oregon?

A. Figures from the 1929 Census show approximately one-third of the population of the two states is dependent on forest industries.

Q. What is the proportion of lumber payrolls to the total payroll?

A. Out of 10 leading industries in Washington and Oregon, lumber payrolls comprise more than 50 per cent of labor's total income.

Q. What other important industries are dependent on West Coast lumber?

A. In Oregon and Washington the forest industries are responsible for 80 per cent of all outbound water tonnage. In both states forest industries create two-thirds of the railroad traffic that originates within their borders.

Q. Can West Coast mills supply all demands for softwood lumber?

A. Yes. They are equipped to meet every call for the latest in wood products, from pre-

fabricated lumber and timber for use on Coulee Dam, the world's biggest engineering job, to the most modern materials specified by architects for home building.

. . . The Romance of the Region . . .

Q. Is there romantic appeal for the visitor in the Douglas fir region?

A. Yes. There are the forests of which there are, roughly, two divisions, the mountain and the coastal.

Q. What are the coastal forests like?

A. The heavy rainfall makes for dense growth that looms as a wall of jungle darkness. Branches sag from long streamers of moss. On the earth the immense bulks of trees that have ripened, died and fallen, make these forests — the rain forests, well-nigh impassable to man.

Q. The rain forests — do they have many summer visitors?

A. No. They are hard to reach, and they may be foggy, wet and cold even in August.

Q. What are the mountain forests like?

A. These forests are the visitor's delight. They resemble a great cathedral with calm, sunlit aisles between rows of mighty conifers. Through them we may see the Cascade Mountain snow peaks, the rugged descending ridges, the glacier-made canyons. The most beautiful of the mountain cathedral forests have been reserved permanently as National Parks.

Q. What is the most romantic aspect of lumbering?

A. Its cargo trade to all parts of the world. In the Argentine, staunch timbers of Douglas fir bridge the streams of the pampas, and over them roll wheat and cattle cars, framed and sheathed with Douglas fir, for the Rio de la Plata. West

Coast lumber serves mankind in the jungle clearings of Amazon rubber plantations, in reconstructing the battlefields of France, in the redemption of London slums. To the Isles of Greece and the Azores, to Cadiz and Cameroon, to the blue harbors of the West Indies and up the yellow rivers of China, to the modern lumber ports of Japan, West Coast forest products are borne by ships that ply the trade routes of the world. The flags of all shipping nations fly from ships moored to West Coast lumber docks.

Q. Isn't the region the Homeland of world famous characters of fiction?

A. Yes. It is the Homeland of Tugboat Annie, Matt Peasley, Cappy Ricks, and the mythical giant of the big timber, Paul Bunyan. Here the lumber industry of this country lives at its greatest, and will always live, with the Douglas fir region and its permanent forests. This is the territory of the West Coast lumber industry, the Greatest Tree-Clad Area in all the world.

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